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# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Vernal District Office  
170 South 500 East  
Vernal, Utah 84078-2799

Phone: (801) 781-4400  
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IN REPLY REFER TO:

3730  
(UT08300)  
UMC 357394

APR 16 1997

*Tony  
Kaghe -  
FBI*

Dear Public Land User:

The claimants of record of the Lucky RC placer mining claim propose to conduct excavation and processing of alluvial material (sand and gravel) on a portion of claim area in order to recover placer gold and other minerals associated with "black sands" in the alluvial deposit. The project area is about 2.7 acres in size and is located about 3 miles southeast of the John Jarvie Historical Site (Browns Park area in northeastern Utah), in Daggett County. Surface and mineral estates are owned by the United States of America and administered by the Bureau of Land Management, Vernal Field Office, Vernal, Utah. The location has been under a Powersite withdrawal since 4/16/25, and the land has been open to mineral entry (open to the location of claims) since 8/25/54.

In order to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), it is necessary for the Bureau to conduct an Environmental Assessment (EA). This EA is enclosed for your review and comment.

We will accept comments on the enclosed EA until June 2, 1997. The most helpful comments will deal with the adequacy of our analysis or will provide new information that could assist us in making decisions on the alternatives contained in the EA. Written comments may be sent to

Peter Sokolosky, Team Leader  
Vernal Field Office - BLM  
170 South 500 East  
Vernal, UT 84078

Thank you for your interest in Utah's public lands

Sincerely,

*David E. Howell*

David E. Howell  
Vernal District Manager

enclosure

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Two pieces of mechanized equipment, a three horsepower (hp), gasoline-powered water pump and a two hp power generator would be used to process the excavated materials. It is anticipated that the motorized equipment could be operated for about 20-90 minutes per work day.

More details concerning the proposed action appear in appendix 1.

### OFF-SITE PROCESSING ALTERNATIVE

The location, regularity, and method of pit excavation would be the same as the proposed action above, except that the material would be processed off-location (taken back to Rock Springs and processed there) instead of being processed on-site as in the proposed action. The pit from which the material would be excavated would be filled with oversized material (expected to fill the void for the most part due to the swell factor associated with excavated ground) to ground level (for safety reasons) while the finer material was being processed. The fine material would be brought back to the site after processing and it would be deposited back in the pit from which it was excavated.

### PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the proposed action and the off site processing alternative would be for the development of the claim (separation of heavy minerals from alluvial material in order to recover placer gold and other metals in "black sands"). The proposed action and off site processing alternative would be needed in order for the claimants of record to determine if a valuable deposit exists or otherwise to explore and develop the locatable minerals on the placer mining claim.

### NO ACTION

No operations, as proposed by the claimants of record would occur on the claim under a BLM-claimant agreement. Current land use practices and resource trends would continue.

## III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

### Land Use Plans and Controls

The 1994 Diamond Mountain Resource Management Plan (DMRA RMP) is silent regarding BLM and claimant agreements outside the "Surface Management" regulations (43 CFR 3809). There are three decisions in the DMRA RMP Record of Decision (Dept. of Interior, 1994) relative to locatable minerals: areawide decisions MN 07 and MN08 and Browns Park ACEC Complex decision BP-27. Basically these decisions would allow for the location of claims provided that mitigating measures are provided that protect

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Mr. Ray Porenta, et al, located a 74.22 acre (association) placer claim in the Browns Park area (T.2N. R.25E. Sec. 31, S2SENW, Lots 9, 14; outline of claim is on maps attached; claim name: Lucky RC; UMC #: 357394; location date 6-16-95). This placer claim is within a powersite withdrawal. The Vernal District Manager was provided a 60 day review period under the provisions of 43 CFR 3734 (regulations governing placer claims in powersite withdrawals) to make a determination whether or not placer mining may substantially interfere with other (land) uses. The Vernal DM determined placer mining may substantially interfere and requested a hearing as per the provisions of 43 CFR 3730 was requested.

The claimants of record petitioned the Department of Interior and Bureau of Land Management to be able to conduct operations in the southwest part of the claim (along a strip of land adjacent to the Green River, see Map 2). If the Authorized Officer (Vernal District Manager) decides some level of operations is possible, the BLM and claimants would develop an operating agreement.

Under the provisions of the Act of July 23, 1955 (also known as the surface resources act, 69 Stat. 367, 30 U.S.C. sec. 601) the locator of an unpatented claim is limited in the use of the claim to those uses specified in the act, namely prospecting, mining, or processing operations and uses reasonably incident thereto. Claimants are forbidden to use the claim for any other purpose such as for filling stations, curio shops, cafes, tourist, or fishing and hunting camps (43 CFR 3712.1(b)).

## II. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

### PROPOSED ACTION

Mr. Ray Porenta has proposed, on a portion of the Lucky RC placer mining claim, to explore for and develop placer gold and any other heavy placer minerals (sometimes referred to as "locatable minerals") from the sand and gravel deposits near the Green River in Browns Park, Daggett County, Utah, utilizing mobile placer processing equipment and hand tools.

The area where operations are proposed is approximately 2.7 acres in size (see 1:7111 scale Map 2). No other areas on the claim are proposed for operations. Hand tools would be used to excavate pits into the sand and gravel deposits. Work would be planned primarily on weekends and holidays. Each pit would be refilled with cobbly material and the finer/lighter weight material not recovered by the placer processing equipment. During a season of work (March-October) as many as 16 pits (each approximately 3'x3'x3') could be excavated, causing about 144 square feet of ground disturbance. It is unknown how long operations would continue, as the distribution of mineral values is not known.